

# What Do You Think About the Christ?



Part 3 of 3

Dallas Burdette December 28, 1997

**Thrust statement:** **He is the Christ, the Son of God.**

**Scripture reading:** **Matthew 22:42**

What do you think about the Christ? There is no one here today who has not asked themselves that question. For almost two thousand years, men and women have searched for an answer to that controversy. In examining this controversy, one is confronted with various responses down through the centuries. Why is this question so important? One's eternal destiny depends upon a proper response to this discussion. Is he god or man? Did he preexist before becoming man? Is he eternal? These are questions that one must solve in seeking a solution to the question that Jesus asked the Pharisees: "**What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?**" (**Matthew 22:42**).<sup>[1]</sup>

In previous messages, we observed the events leading up to the Bethlehem manger, Christ as teacher and physician, the Pharisees perception of Jesus, Martha's faith in Him, Nicodemus' rendezvous with the master, and the testimony of Caiaphas and Pilate. Today, we want to focus on several testimonies: the centurion's confession (**Matthew 27:34**), the penitent thief on the cross (**Luke 23:41**), John the Baptist's acknowledgment of Him as the Lamb of God (**John 1:29**), Peter's confession that He is both Lord and Christ (**Acts 2:36**), John's statement that He was "in the beginning," (**John 1:1**), Thomas's bold statement about Jesus being his Lord and God (**John 20:28**), Paul's gratitude to Christ (**Philippians 3:7-11**), angels singing about the birth of the savior (**Luke 2:9-14**), the host of heaven and earth praising God about the Lamb (**Revelation 5:11-14**), and, finally, God's testimony concerning His Son (**Matthew 3:17**). This list is indeed quite an array of witnesses to call upon.

**The Centurion.** There are a number of centurions mentioned in the New Testament, but today we are concerned about one of those centurions -- the one that witnessed the crucifixion. This centurion heard Jesus cry in a loud voice and saw him die. The moment of Jesus' death, according to Matthew, the earth shook, the rocks split, tombs broke open, and the bodies of many were raised to life. Matthew captures the excitement and confession of one of the centurions that witnessed all of this, he writes: "the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!'" (**Matthew 27:54**). Do you believe this testimony from one who was an eyewitness of the many miraculous events that occurred that day as a result of Christ's crucifixion, from one who knew that this One surely was the Son of God. Yes he

heard Jesus cry out about the sixth hour: "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*"—which means, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" (**Mark 15:34**). Is it any wonder that the centurion believed?

**The thief on the Cross.** Since there were two thieves on the cross, I want to zero in on the conversation of one particular one. What did one of the thieves on the cross think of Him? Matthew gives an interesting comment about the two robbers crucified with Him. But before Matthew makes a comment about the robbers, he tells us that the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders mocked Him. Then Matthew adds, "In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him" (**Matthew 27:44**). Undoubtedly, one of the criminals had a change of heart, because Luke informs us that

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (**Luke 23:39-41**).

This criminal knew that Jesus had done nothing wrong; he requested that Jesus remember him when He comes into His kingdom. Do you want Jesus to remember you? The kingdom of God is here today. Are you a part of this kingdom? I ask you to search your heart and make a decision for Christ today.

**John the Baptist.** Let us hear from another witness -- the wilderness preacher. This man was so powerful in his presentation that he drew all Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan into the wilderness to hear him (**Matthew 3:5**). He burst upon the nation of Israel like a flash of a meteor. What did John think about Jesus? Hear his testimony after he baptized a number of penitent individuals. "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (**John 1:29**). That was John's testimony concerning who Jesus is. Again, John the apostle cites another incident in which John the Baptist gives further testimony.

"I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God" (**John 1:32-34**).

**Peter.** Peter was one of the twelve disciples. He witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus on the mount; and, in spite of this revelation, he later denied him at his trial. But after the resurrection of Jesus, we find Peter, fifty days after the resurrection event, proclaiming: "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (**Acts 2:36**). How did the people respond to his message? Luke tells us that following Peter's declaration about the Christ that "they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'" (**Acts 2:37**). Are you "cut to the heart" over your rejection of the Christ? Are you "cut to the heart" over your sins? If so, why not repent and be immersed for the forgiveness of your sins as 3000 did on that day?

**John the Beloved Disciple.** John takes up his pen and with one stroke, as it were, goes back into time, even before Adam and Eve. He writes:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men (**John 1:1-**

4).

Again, John give his eyewitness testimony concerning this One that "was with God in the beginning."

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete (**1 John 1:1-4**).

**Thomas the Doubter.** Thomas also was one of His twelve disciples. In spite of his travels with Jesus, he, nevertheless, found it difficult to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. He said that he would not believe, unless he could put his fingers into the wound in his side. This event was so significant that John recorded his unbelief and confession. John says,

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it" (**John 20:24-25**).

Did Thomas change his mind? Well, let's hear the rest of the story. John, as he relates this episode, captures the scene in very graphic detail as he describes Thomas' encounter with Jesus a week later.

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "**Peace be with you!**" Then he said to Thomas, "**Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.**" Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "**Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed**" (**John 20:26-29**).

Do you believe? Thomas did! He confessed Jesus as "My Lord and my God!"

**Saul the Persecutor.** Saul the persecutor later became Paul the apostle. You remember the story of Paul on the Damascus Road, don't you? In his encounter with the Christ, he cried out, "Who are you, Lord?" (**Acts 9:5**). Jesus responded by saying, "**I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,**" (**Acts 9:5**). What a change that one interview made with Paul. A few years later we hear him saying,

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead (**Philippians 3:7-11**).

How do you feel about the Christ? Do you consider the things of the world as rubbish in order that you

might gain the Christ?

**The Angels of God.** Let us summons the heavenly host for their testimony. They saw Him in the bosom of the Father before the world was. They saw Him before the dawn of creation. They saw Him before the morning stars sang together. They saw him leave the throne and come down to the manger. What a scene that must have been for them to witness. Listen, as the silence of heaven is broken to the shepherds living out in the fields:

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.** This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, **"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests"** ([Luke 2:9-14](#)).

**The Host of Heaven and Earth.** Many on earth rejected him, even though many confessed him. But in heaven where he had been from the foundation of the world, we find a different picture. Listen in on the praise of the angels, the living creatures, the elder, and all creatures:

the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped ([Revelation 5:11-14](#)).

**God the Father.** The last witness we call upon today is none other than God Himself. Following the baptism of Jesus, God speaks, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" ([Matthew 3:17](#)). Again, on the Mount of Transfiguration, God tells Peter, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" ([Matthew 17:5](#)). That voice is still echoing, "listen to him," "listen to him"! Will you not listen to the voice of the Son of God? He pleads with everyone to turn from their sinful way of life and find comfort and healing in Him.

### Conclusion

Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" ([Matthew 11:28-30](#)).

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**Preached:**

**Grassy Church of Christ (Arab, Alabama)**  
**12-28-97**  
**11 a.m.**

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## ENDNOTES

[1] Unless noted otherwise, all Scripture citations are from the NIV.